

California Department of Veterans Affairs



NEWS RELEASE

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LEGISLATURE TO FULLY FUND CALIFORNIA'S FIVE NEW VETERANS HOMES *Agrees with Gov. Schwarzenegger to fulfill CA's commitment to its veterans*

SACRAMENTO – August 27, 2004 – Late today AB 1077 (Wesson), a bill sponsored by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA), passed both houses of the Legislature, nearly unanimously (66 to 2 in the Assembly and 30 to 1 in the Senate), in a bipartisan demonstration of support for California's 2.3 million veterans. AB 1077 provides an additional \$100 million in Lease Revenue bond authority for adequate designing, constructing and equipping of five new Veterans Homes in Lancaster, Ventura, West Los Angeles, Fresno, and Redding. Without the additional funds provided by AB 1077, the hard work of many veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, legislators, the CDVA, and the United State Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) could not have been completed and California would not have been able to fulfill its commitment to veterans.

"On behalf of all grateful California veterans, I want to thank Governor Schwarzenegger for his unwavering commitment to veterans. And without Speaker Emeritus Herb Wesson and Senator Bill Morrow's efforts in shepherding this bill through the legislature, this victory for veterans wouldn't have been possible," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Tom Johnson. "California can now fulfill its promise to veterans of providing them with more Veterans Homes and the care which many of them so desperately need. This is certainly welcome news for veterans tonight."

The additional funding is necessary because previous cost estimates were based on designs similar to those used for the Veterans Home in Chula Vista. The West Los Angeles site, however, has required major design changes to accommodate more costly multi-story buildings with unique architectural and construction challenges, such as seismic site preparation requirements. Additionally, the USDVA recently revised their design specifications to require more semi-private and private rooms with fewer residents per bathroom. These design changes, coupled with dramatically increased prices for steel and concrete, lead to considerable increases in the cost of the project.

These new Veterans Homes will now be designed to create a more home-like atmosphere, which is becoming the industry standard. They will allow CDVA to offer residents the highest quality of care possible. These designs will also meet Leadership in Energy Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

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